

Role of a Physical Therapist in Rehabilitation

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Abstract : Objectives: Physiotherapy in the intensive care unit (ICU) improves patient outcomes. We aimed to determine the characteristics of physiotherapy practice and critical barriers to applying physiotherapy in ICUs. Materials and Methods: A 54-item survey for determining the characteristics physiotherapists and physiotherapy applications in the ICU was developed. The survey was electronically sent to potential participants through the Turkish Physiotherapy Association network. Sixty-five physiotherapists (47F and 18M; 23–52 years; ICU experience: 6.0 ± 6.2 years) completed the survey. The data were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods. Results: The duration of ICU practice was 3.51 ± 2.10 h/day. Positioning (90.8%), active exercises (90.8%), breathing exercises (89.2%), passive exercises (87.7%), and percussion (87.7%) were the most commonly used applications. The barriers were related to physiotherapists (low level of employment and practice, lack of shift); patients (unwillingness, instability, participation restriction); teamwork (lack of awareness and communication); equipment (inadequacy, non-priority to purchase); and legal (reimbursement, lack of direct physiotherapy access, non-recognition of autonomy) procedures. Conclusion: The most common interventions were positioning, active, passive, breathing exercises, and percussion. Critical barriers toward physiotherapy are multifactorial and related to physiotherapists, patients, teams, equipment, and legal procedures. Physiotherapist employment, service maintenance, and multidisciplinary teamwork should be considered for physiotherapy effectiveness in ICUs.

Keywords : intensive care units, physical therapy, physiotherapy, exercises

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